

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1. - 97. (Cancelled)

98. (Currently Amended) A connector as claimed in claim ~~[[97]]~~ 104, in which different ones of the chambers arranged to mate are connectable, individually or in groups, to different pressure sources.

99 - 103. (Cancelled)

104. (Currently Amended) A connector for connecting a preform ~~as claimed in claim 99, which preform is for a microstructured fiber and which preform comprises a plurality of elongate elements, at least some of the elongate elements having a hole therein, to a pressure source, the connector comprising a plurality of chambers, wherein each chamber is arranged to mate with one or more of the elongate elements of the preform having a hole therein, and each chamber being connectable to a pressure source;~~

the connector further comprising a plurality of apertures arranged to receive ends of one or more of the elongate elements of the preform having a hole therein, wherein the chambers are arranged so that the ends of the one or more elongate elements having a hole therein received by said apertures terminate in said chambers; and

~~in which~~ the chambers are distributed in the connector along ~~[[the]]~~ a direction in which ~~tubes of a~~ the elongate elements of the preform connected to the connector are intended to pass through the apertures.

105.-108. (Cancelled)

109. (Currently Amended) A connector as claimed in claim 104 ~~[[99]]~~, wherein at least one dimension of each chamber orthogonal to the direction in which the elongate elements of the ~~tubes of a~~ preform connected to the connector are intended to pass through the apertures is larger than the diameter of the elongate elements ~~individual tubes~~.

110. (Cancelled)

111. (Currently Amended) A connector for connecting a fiber preform, which preform is for a microstructured fiber and which preform comprises a plurality of elongate elements, at least some of the elongate elements having a hole therein, to a pressure source, the connector comprising a plurality of chambers arranged in a stack, each chamber comprising a base comprising holes going through the base, said holes being arranged to allow at least some of the elongate elements ~~tubes~~ of a preform to pass from the chamber to a neighbouring chamber in said stack, said chambers being connectable to a pressure source.

112. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 111, wherein said holes in said bases of said chambers are adapted to allow passage of a tubular shaped object from one chamber to a neighbouring chamber.

113. (Cancelled)

114. (Currently Amended) A connector comprising a plurality of sections arranged in a stack extending in a longitudinal direction from a first end to a second end, each section comprising a chamber, a passage in fluid communication with said chamber, and at least one opening hole, wherein the opening hole of ~~[[a]]~~ at least one section is arranged to provide access to ~~[[a]]~~ the chamber of that section for a plurality of elongate elements having holes therein and extending in a preform at least one tub extending longitudinally from the first end of the stack through to the section, said passage being connectable to an external pressure controller so that the chambers of the different sections can be pressurized to a different pressure.

115. (Currently Amended) A connector as claimed in claim 104, wherein at least one of said elongate elements ~~tubes~~ may pass through one or more chambers ~~chamber~~ and terminate in a chamber arranged further from the aperture than the chamber(s) through which that at least one elongate element ~~tubes~~ passes.

116. (Cancelled)

117. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 111, wherein each of said chambers being connectable to a respective pressure source.